

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ATHENS PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 085532

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, GR, NATO

SUBJECT: U. S. POLICY TOWARDS GREECE

REF: USNATO 2175; ATHENS 2415

1. ITEM 5 OF DIA 190305Z APRIL 74 CITED REF A IS QUOTED
BELOW VERBATIM PER REQUEST REFTEL B:

2. "UNREST IN THE ARMY MAY FORCE AN ATTEMPT TO REMOVE
BRIG GEN IOANNIDIS.(S/NFD)

(S/NFD) THE ABSENCE OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP, INTERNAL
MILITARY DISSENSION, AND DISSATISFACTION WITH THE CIVILIAN
GOVERNMENT ARE INCREASING MILITARY UNREST, WHICH MAY SOON
THREATEN THE TENUOUS HOLD BRIG GEN IOANNIDIS HAS OVER THE
MILITARY. THE US DEFENSE ATTACHE IN ATHENS HAS REPORTED
THAT IOANNIDIS, POSSIBLY FEARFUL OF A COUNTERCOUP, HAS BEEN
ABSENT FROM THE GREEK PENTAGON FOR TWO WEEKS AND HAS
SURROUNDED HIMSELF WITH ONLY TRUSTED SUPPORTERS. PRESIDENT
GIZIKIS IS NORMALLY UNGUARDED BUT HAS RECENTLY BEEN SEEN
WITH A MILITARY POLICE ESCORT.

(S/NFD) IOANNIDIS STILL CONTROLS THE GOVERNMENT AND THE
ATHENS MILITARY COMMANDS. THE POWER BEHIND ANY REGIME,

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HOWEVER, MUST COME FROM "C" CORPS, WITH HEADQUARTERS IN

THESSALONIKI. LOYALTY OF THE CORPS NOW IS QUESTIONABLE, AND ITS COMMANDER, LT GEN DAVOS, REFUSED TO ALLOW IOANNIDIS PERMISSION TO ADDRESS ITS OFFICERS LAST MONTH. THE UNUSUAL NUMBER OF VISITS TO THE CORPS DURING FEBRUARY AND MARCH BY GEN BONANOS, COMMANDER OF HELLENIC ARMED FORCES, AND LT GEN GALATSANOS, COMMANDER OF HELLENIC ARMY, ARE ALSO SIGNIFICANT. THESE TRIPS WERE LOW-KEY AND REPORTEDLY BECAUSE OF DIFFERENCES AMONG OFFICERS. A RELIABLE SOURCE HAS STATED THAT DAVOS AND GALATSANOS ARE PLOTTING AGAINST IOANNIDIS. GEN BONANOS IS SAID TO BE AWARE OF THE SCHEME BUT IS UNCOMMITTED.

(S/NFD) THE POSSIBILITY REMAINS THAT IOANNIDIS COULD HAVE AN UNTIMELY ACCIDENT OR THE ARMY IN THE NORTH MIGHT ATTEMPT TO ESTABLISH A SEPARATE GOVERNMENT. A "COUP BY ULTIMATUM" FROM THE NORTHERN COMMAND WOULD PROBABLY BRING DOWN THE REGIME. ANY COUP ATTEMPT IN ATHENS, IOANNIDIS' STRONGHOLD, COULD PRECIPITATE A BLOODY CONFLICT BETWEEN HIS SUPPORTERS AND MORE MODERATE ELEMENTS OF THE ARMED FORCES. THE EASE WITH WHICH PRESIDENT PAPADOPOULOS WAS REMOVED LAST NOVEMBER MAY OFFER ENCOURAGEMENT TO DISSIDENTS TO ATTEMPT YET ANOTHER COUP.
(SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM GDS-31 DEC 82), KISSINGER

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